

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Federal directives and State law mandate use of the Incident Command System (ICS) by their agencies as the emergency management system for oil and hazardous substance spill response. Management of responses to oil and hazardous substance releases is further governed by the National Contingency Plan (NCP). Industry contingency plan holders are likewise required to implement a response system as part of their overall response plan.

The National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS) version of the ICS, which was developed for wildland firefighting, is frequently referred to as the adopted model for oil and hazardous substance spill response. The NIIMS ICS, however, is more than an emergency management structure as it includes standardized ordering systems, a governing body which oversees changes and modifications, training, qualifications, callout, and many other features. These standard elements have not been fully addressed as part of an ICS for oil and hazardous substance spill response.

A major difference in spill response operations is the government oversight role that is a key element in any Responsible Party (RP)-led incident. The Multiagency Coordination System (MACS) is another concept of NIIMS that cannot be strictly applied to an oil spill response operation. Therefore, there are unique aspects of oil and hazardous substance spill response that necessitate modification of the NIIMS in order to meet the desired objectives.

As a result, certain parties interested in oil and hazardous substance spill response formed the Standard Oil Spill Response Management System (STORMS) Task Force to develop an ICS that took into account the unique needs of oil and hazardous substance spill response, while adhering as much as possible to NIIMS. The STORMS Task Force produced the first version of the "oilized" ICS Field Operations Guide (FOG) in 1996. An updated version of the FOG was prepared by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) in 1998, which incorporated parts of the Alaska Clean Seas (ACS) Technical Manual, and also captured the lessons learned from spills and drills in Alaska.

In October 1998, the Statewide Oil and Hazardous Substance Incident Management System Work Group (now known as the Alaska Incident Management System (AIMS) Work Group) was created which included representatives from federal and State agencies, as well as representatives

from the oil industry and spill cooperatives. The primary task of this ad hoc work group was to prepare standardized spill response management guidelines acceptable to all users in Alaska.

Following publication and distribution of the document in January 2000, comments were solicited from a wide spectrum of potential response agencies, including the Alaska Regional Response Team. The AIMS Guide was subsequently updated to include pertinent comments and suggestions.

The resultant product, ***The Alaska Incident Management System Guide for Oil and Hazardous Substance Response (AIMS Guide)***, is a landmark step because it: merges the concepts of the NCP with NIIMS; has received acceptance by both government and industry users in Alaska; has been customized to meet Alaska's unique needs; is consistent with the latest update published by the Western States/British Columbia Task Force FOG update workgroup, and the U.S. Coast Guard Incident Management Handbook; and will yield substantial savings to all users by providing a useful guideline for the Alaska spill response community.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FEATURES

This guide provides for maximum flexibility in varied situations, but specific training is required for effective implementation. The actual size of an ICS organization and the government's role in the response is event-specific. Not all positions need to be filled. The size of the organization is dependent on the magnitude of the incident and can be expanded or contracted as necessary.

The following is a brief summary of the major features of this guide.

- **Three Levels of a Response:** This guide recognizes that there may be three levels of a response with a corresponding team for each level: response in the field by the Field Response Team (FRT); follow-on incident management by the Incident Management Team (IMT); and upper level crisis management support provided by a Crisis Management Team (CMT). The specific roles and responsibilities of each team are addressed in the appropriate sections.
- **Three Potential Roles for Governmental Agencies:** This guide also recognizes three potential roles for government agencies engaged in a spill response operation. These include: government oversight; augmentation of a responsible party's response; and the government as the lead agency in the response.
- **Local On-Scene Coordinator (LOSC):** The role of the LOSC is discussed in this guide. The LOSC is a part of the Unified Command (UC) in situations where there is an immediate threat to public health and safety, and/or where local involvement in UC is otherwise pre-identified in the subarea contingency plans.

- **Regional Stakeholder Committee (RSC):** In an effort to minimize the confusion with the NIIMS MACS concept, the term RSC was developed to denote the group of stakeholders who may have a vested interest in a spill event.
- **Incident Action Plan/General Plan (IAP/GP) Unit:** This is an optional unit that may be formed within the Planning Section. The unit's primary focus is the preparation of the IAP and GP.
- **Operations Section Organization:** Within the Operations Section, the guide provides for a wide variety of functions that may be organized into branches, divisions, groups, task forces, etc. A pre-established organizational structure is not provided as each situation will determine the need for functional elements, which can then be organized to best meet the needs of the Operations Section Chief.
- **Incident Management System Knowledge/Training Guidelines:** A separate appendix (*Appendix C*) provides recommended knowledge and training guidelines for each of the IMS positions discussed in the guide.
- **General Purpose and Description of ICS Forms:** Although no forms are included in this document, the general purpose for the use of each form is provided.
- **IMT Meeting Guidelines:** A general schedule of events (*an Incident Management System Planning Cycle*) and the objectives and topics for specific meetings are provided as a guideline.
- **Incident Situation Status – Information Center Status Boards:** Standard Situation Status Board examples are provided as a guideline to post in the Information Centers.

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